

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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ACDA-07 /116 W

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R 180550Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 652
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY LOME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LILONGWE 0274

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PORT, OAU, MI
SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS - OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
MEETING, LOME, FEBRUARY 22-26

REF: STATE 032906

1. MALAWI IS NOT ACTIVE IN INTERNATIONAL FORA AND MAY BE EXPECTED TO SHOW INTEREST ONLY IN FEW ISSUES AND TO FOLLOW CONSENSUS ON MOST ISSUES EXCEPT WHERE PRESIDENT BANDA HAS STRONG VIEWS AND IS WILLING TO BREAK RANKS WITH MAJORITY SUCH AS ON MIDDLE EAST AND KOREA. LIFE PRESIDENT BANDA PERSONALLY MAKES ALL FOREIGN AFFAIRS DECISIONS AND MALAWI REPS TO CONFERENCES DO NOT HAVE FLEXIBILITY.

2. AFRICAN ISSUES:

A. WHILE RHODESIAN ISSUE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO MALAWI, D
PRESIDENT BANDA HAS OPTED OUT AND HAS PLAYED NO REPEAT NO
ROLE OTHER THAN TO ACT AS ELDER STATESMAN FROM TIME TO
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TIME WHEN HIS ADVICE HAS BEEN SOLICITED BY NATIONALIST LEADERS NKOMO, MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE. GOM HAS NOT MADE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE DECISION TO RECOGNIZE PATRIOTIC FRONT (PF) AS SPOKESMAN FOR NATIONALIST MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE BANDA FAVORS BROAD NATIONALIST MOVEMENT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE BUT THAT HE WILL GO ALONG WITH WHATEVER OAU

CONSENSUS EMERGES. IF LINES ARE SHARPLY DRAWN HE WILL PROBABLY BE IN CAMP FAVORING BROAD NATIONALIST MOVEMENT.

B. BANDA TRADITIONALLY FAVORS PEACEFUL AND EVOLUTIONARY SETTLEMENTS (POLICY OF "CONTACT AND DIALOGUE") AND WOULD THEREFORE TEND TO SUPPORT US POSITION ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS ALTHOUGH HE HAS CHOSEN NOT TO ENDORSE THEM PUBLICLY.

3. MULTILATERAL ISSUES.

A. POLITICAL

(1) MIDDLE EAST. MALAWI MAINTAINS CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND HAS BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF ISRAEL AND US POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST IN INTERNATIONAL FORA EVEN THOUGH IT HAS MEANT STANDING OUT AS SMALL MINORITY.

(2) KOREA. STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST BIAS OF PRESIDENT BANDA HAS ENABLED MALAWI TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF US POSITIONS ON KOREA.

(3) ON AFRICAN ISSUES IN UN, SEE PARA 2 ABOVE.

(4) ECA CONFERENCE. GOM WILL AT BEST BE REPRESENTED AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO PLAY ACTIVE PART (LILONGWE 0256, NOTAL).

B. ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL. GOM HAS SHOWN ONLY MARGINAL
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INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES AND HAS LITTLE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, PARTICULARLY AMONG THOSE WHO ATTEND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. ON ALL ISSUES LISTED PARA 4(B) REFTEL, GOM MAY BE EXPECTED TO BE PASSIVE AND GO ALONG WITH MAJORITY OR CONSENSUS.
STEVENSON

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